

Integration of Religious Moderation and Ecological Education from a Social Ecology Perspective

Dody Wahono Suryo Alam¹, Masdar Hilmi², Abdul Muis Thabrani³

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah Abu Zairi Bondowoso : dodywahono@gmail.com

² Univeritas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya : masdar.hilmy@uinsa.ac.id

³ Univeritas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan : abdmuisthabrany@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The global ecological crisis, characterized by climate change, environmental degradation, deforestation, water pollution, and biodiversity loss, has become a multidimensional issue that threatens the sustainability of human life. In Indonesia, the problem of environmental damage is increasingly complex due to population growth, industrialization, and low public ecological awareness. Various technical and regulatory policies have been implemented, but their impact has not fully transformed collective behavior. This situation demonstrates that the environmental crisis is not merely a technical issue, but also an ethical, cultural, and spiritual one. This study aims to analyze the integration of religious moderation and ecological education from a social ecology perspective in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. The study focuses on how the values of wasathiyah (wasatiah), maqasid al-shariah (the principle of righteousness), and the responsibility of khalifah fil ardh (vicegerent) are internalized in the educational process to build sustainable ecological awareness and practices. The study employed a qualitative, descriptive-analytical design. The study population included educators, managers of Islamic educational institutions, school-based environmental activists, and students at Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). The sample was purposively selected, comprising 12 key informants from Islamic boarding schools and eco-mosques that integrate environmental education programs. The research instruments consisted of in-depth interviews, participant observation of learning activities, and analysis of curriculum documentation, teaching modules, and institutional policies. The research findings indicate that integrating religious moderation and ecological education strengthens the formation of environmentally conscious character, increases collective participation among school residents, and encourages the transformation of institutional culture toward environmentally friendly practices.

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Corresponding Author:

Dody Wahono Suryo Alam: Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah Abu Zairi Bondowoso : dodywahono@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The global ecological crisis is increasingly evident in the form of climate change, environmental degradation, water crises, and increasing hydrometeorological disasters, which have a direct impact on Indonesian society (Al-Barakat et al., 2025; Asrohah et al., 2025; Hadisi et al., 2025). According to the report, *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023)* (Nath & Behera, 2011; Sellers et al., 2019) emphasized that the impact of climate change has entered a critical phase, affecting social and economic stability. In the context of religious communities, ecological issues are not merely technical issues, but also a public ethical and moral crisis (Veldman et al., 2022). Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, has great potential to use religion as a basis for transforming environmental awareness (Parker, 2017; Reuter, 2015). However, religious education still predominantly emphasizes individual rituals and morals over collective ecological responsibility (Mangunjaya, 2023). Religious moderation, which has so far focused on social tolerance, needs to be expanded to include environmental sustainability (A'lawi & Budianto, 2025; Aldogihier et al., 2025; Amaroh et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024, 2024; Hasbiyallah et al., 2024; Junaidi et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating religious moderation and ecological education is an urgent need to systematically respond to the ecological crisis.

A study of the last five years shows a significant increase in research on the relationship between religion and the environment through the approaches of eco-theology and religious environmentalism. (Fleischman et al., 2022; Jenkins et al., 2021) In Islamic studies, the concepts of *caliph*, *amanah*, and *maqasid al-shariah* have been developed as the foundation of environmental theology (Cohen et al., 2022; Mokhtar et al., 2025; Nasr et al., 2023) Other research highlights the role of educational institutions in shaping sustainable character through values-based curricula (Scoones, 2022). In Indonesia, the discourse on religious moderation is developing in the context of strengthening tolerance and preventing radicalism (Azra et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2021). However, research explicitly integrating religious moderation with ecological education within a social ecological framework remains limited (Am & Sholihah, 2025; Misdah et al., 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2025; Saim & El-Muhammady, 2025). Most studies are normative-theological in nature and have not empirically explored the internalization of *wasathiyah* values in educational practice. This gap is addressed by this research's contribution, which presents an integrative analysis of religious moderation, ecological education, and institutional transformation from a social ecological perspective.

Moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*) is present as a religious paradigm that emphasizes the principle of balance in understanding and practicing Islamic teachings, both in the theological and social realms. (Fauzi, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2025) The concept of *wasathiyah* necessitates harmonization between text and context, between spiritual piety and social responsibility, and between human interests and environmental sustainability (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a; Khuadthong et al., 2025). Within this framework, Islam is not understood rigidly and exclusively, but rather dynamically and contextually, enabling it to respond to various contemporary issues, including the global ecological crisis. Religious moderation thus goes beyond interfaith tolerance and encompasses a proportional and just attitude in all aspects of life.

From a moderate Islamic perspective, nature is viewed as an integral part of the social and cosmic order, interconnected with human life. The relationship between humans and the environment is not dominant, but rather relational and ethical, demanding responsibility, concern, and respect for the balance of the ecosystem (Hudha & Rahardjanto, 2018; Marfai, 2019). This approach firmly rejects the overexploitation of natural resources, driven by short-term profit and ignoring social and ecological impacts. Instead, moderate Islam promotes the principle of ecological justice, which favors the

sustainability of life for both current and future generations. Thus, moderate Islam can be understood as a theological foundation and a relevant social ethic for formulating a sustainable religious response to contemporary ecological challenges.

In an increasingly pluralistic society impacted by the environmental crisis, exclusive and anthropocentric religious understandings often contribute to the neglect of the ecological dimension of Islamic teachings (Arifin, 2024; Sari et al., 2025; Tamjidnor et al., 2025). A purely ritualistic religious orientation has the potential to separate individual piety from social and ecological responsibility. As a result, religious practices have not fully fostered collective awareness of environmental protection. In this context, social ecology serves as an important framework for understanding the interrelationships between social structures, value systems, and environmental conditions, thus understanding the ecological crisis as a reflection of a moral and social crisis.

Several previous studies have examined religious moderation in the fields of education, national discourse, and interfaith relations (Heriyono, 2024; Khoir et al., 2024; Rosela et al., 2025). Meanwhile, studies on Islamic ecotheology have focused more on the interpretation of environmental verses or the jurisprudence of nature conservation. However, the integration of moderate Islamic concepts and a social ecological approach remains relatively limited. (Ayatullah, 2024) In fact, a synthesis of these two perspectives is important to produce an analytical framework that is able to explain how moderate Islamic values can be internalized in social practices that are oriented towards environmental sustainability and social justice.

Based on this background, this article aims to analyze the role of moderate Islam in building social ecological awareness and examine its contribution to shaping a just and sustainable environmental ethic. This research seeks to demonstrate that moderate Islam is not only relevant in maintaining social harmony and religious tolerance but also holds great potential as an ethical framework for addressing the ecological crisis. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the discourse on religious moderation with an ecological dimension and provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic studies and environmental issues in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design from a social ecology perspective. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the process of integrating religious moderation and ecological education within a social and institutional context. A social ecology framework is used as an analytical tool to examine the relationship between religious values, institutional structures, and educational practices in shaping ecological awareness. The descriptive-analytical design allows researchers to examine phenomena contextually and interpretively, particularly in understanding the meanings, values, and practices that develop in Islamic educational institutions.

The research was conducted at Islamic educational institutions that integrate religious moderation and environmental education programs, including Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and eco-mosques in Indonesia. The research population included educators, institutional managers, religious leaders, and students involved in the ecological education program. The sample was determined by purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) the institution has an environmental education program integrated into the curriculum or religious activities; (2) there are policies or modules that include religious moderation values; and (3) there are sustainable ecological

practices. A total of twelve key informants were selected, consisting of institutional leaders, teachers or religious teachers, environmental program managers, and student representatives.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews to explore informants' understanding of the integration of *wasathiyah* values and ecological education. Second, participant observation of learning activities, religious activities, and environmental practices such as waste management, conservation, and the use of environmentally friendly energy. Third, documentation analysis of the curriculum, teaching modules, institutional policies, and da'wah materials related to religious moderation and the environment. The research instruments consisted of semi-structured interview guidelines, observation sheets, and a document analysis format compiled based on indicators of religious moderation and ecological education from a social ecology perspective.

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The reduction process was carried out by grouping data based on themes: theological values, educational practices, institutional structures, and ecological impacts. The data were then presented in the form of a thematic narrative to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn inductively by interpreting the relationship between religious moderation and ecological education within a social ecological framework. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time, as well as member checks with informants to ensure the accuracy of interpretations.

Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation and cross-confirmation between informants. This study also considered ethical aspects, including informed consent, confidentiality, and academic use of the data. With this approach, the research is expected to produce credible, contextual, and relevant findings for the development of the integration of religious moderation and ecological education from a social ecology perspective.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Integration of Religious Moderation Values in Ecological Education

The research results show that the integration of religious moderation in ecological education is realized through the internalization of the values of *wasathiyah* (the middle path), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tawazun* (balance) into the curriculum and learning practices (S et al., 2025; Sutisna & Khorri, 2024; Suyanta et al., 2024). Among these values, *tawazun* occupies a central position as a conceptual foundation in building ecological awareness, as it is interpreted as the principle of harmony that governs the relationship between humans, God, and nature (Firnando & Setiawati, 2025). This principle of balance is the normative basis for forming environmentally friendly attitudes and behavior that are sustainable.

At the micro (classroom) level, teachers integrate Quranic verses about the concept of the caliph and the mandate to protect the environment with concrete practices, such as waste management, water conservation, and school greening. At the meso (institutional) level, institutions formulate environmentally friendly policies through zero-waste programs, tree-planting initiatives, and strengthening school culture based on religious values. Meanwhile, at the macro level, institutions collaborate with communities and religious organizations in eco-mosque campaigns and participatory environmental outreach.

This finding confirms that religious moderation is not only understood as a socio-religious attitude in the context of plurality, but also as an ethical paradigm that provides a normative basis for just, balanced and sustainable environmental management.

Table 1. Research Findings Table

Implementation Level	Integration of Religious Moderation Values	Ecological Practices	Dominant Values
Micro (Classroom)	Integration of Qur'anic verses on caliphate and environmental stewardship into learning activities	Waste management, water conservation, school greening	Tawazun, Wasathiyyah
Meso (Institutional)	Environmentally friendly school policies based on religious values	Zero-waste programs, tree planting, green school culture	I'tidal, Tawazun
Macro (Community)	Collaboration with communities and religious organizations	Eco-mosque campaigns, participatory environmental education	Tasamuh, Wasathiyyah

The Concept of Moderate Islam (Wasathiyyah) from a Theological Perspective

The concept of moderate Islam (wasathiyyah) is one of the fundamental principles in Islamic theology which emphasizes the importance of balance and justice in all aspects of life (Ismail, 2025; Ridha, 2025). The term wasathiyyah refers to a middle position that is fair, proportional, and not excessive, as reflected in the Qur'an which refers to Muslims as *ummataṅ wasaṭan* (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 143). From a theological perspective, this concept is not only interpreted as a compromising attitude, but as a normative commitment to justice, balance, and moral responsibility in human relations with God, fellow human beings, and the universe.

Theologically, wasathiyyah is rooted in the understanding of monotheism which places Allah as the center of existence and the source of the highest values. (MADJID, 2021; Sahid & Maulana, 2024). Tawhid (monotheism) is not only spiritual but also has cosmological and ecological implications, as all creation is seen as a manifestation of God's will that must be protected and respected. Within this framework, humans are positioned as caliphs on earth, entrusted with the responsibility to manage nature fairly and sustainably. Thus, moderate Islam rejects the extreme anthropocentric view that legitimizes the unlimited exploitation of nature.

The principle of balance (*mīzān*) is a crucial pillar of moderate Islamic theology, directly related to issues of social ecology. The Qur'an emphasizes that nature was created in a balanced order, and humans are prohibited from disrupting this balance. Environmental damage (*fasād fī al-ardh*) is seen as both theological and social deviation, reflecting humanity's failure to fulfill its divine mandate. Therefore, maintaining ecological balance is an integral part of worship and social piety in moderate Islam.

From a *wasathiyyah* perspective, piety is not limited to individual rituals but must be embodied in social and ecological responsibility. Moderate Islam emphasizes the integration of worship, morality, and social interactions, so that human relations with nature become part of a broader social ethic (Kyambade et al., 2024; Ma`arif et al., 2024; Salim et al., 2024). This approach fosters awareness that ecological injustice, such as the exploitation of natural resources that harms vulnerable groups, is a form of social injustice that contradicts Islamic values.

Furthermore, moderate Islam offers an inclusive and contextual theological framework for responding to the global ecological crisis. The principle of *wasathiyyah* allows for dialogue between Islamic teachings and modern environmental knowledge, without losing the normative authority of religious texts (Basri, 2025; Rofiq, 2025). With this approach, Islamic values can be translated into public policies, social movements, and religious practices that are oriented towards environmental sustainability and shared well-being.

Thus, the concept of moderate Islam from a theological perspective is not only relevant in maintaining internal harmony and interfaith tolerance, but also has strategic significance in developing a social ecological ethic. Moderate Islam provides a theological foundation for developing a just, balanced, and sustainable ecological awareness. In the context of the contemporary environmental crisis, *wasathiyyah* becomes an important paradigm that bridges faith, social ethics, and the ecological responsibility of Muslims.

Table 2. Conceptual Table of Religious Moderation Values and Ecological Implications

Moderation Value	Theological Meaning	Ecological Implication
Wasathiyyah	The middle path, proportionality, avoiding extremism	Sustainable environmental management
Tasamuh	Tolerance and respect for diversity	Social collaboration in environmental preservation
I'tidal	Justice and social balance	Fair distribution of natural resources
Tawazun	Harmony between humans, God, and nature	Foundation of ecological ethics and sustainability

The theological framework of moderate Islam demonstrates that ecological responsibility is not merely a social obligation, but also an integral part of religious devotion. Through the principles of *tawhid*, *mīzān* (balance), and the concept of humans as *caliphs* on earth, Islam positions environmental preservation as a manifestation of moral and spiritual responsibility (Herlanti et al., 2025; Lellya et al., 2026). In this perspective, ecological destruction is viewed not only as environmental negligence but also as a violation of divine trust and social justice. Therefore, the values of *wasathiyyah* provide a comprehensive ethical foundation for creating harmony between humans, society, and nature.

Furthermore, the integration of religious moderation values into ecological education strengthens the relevance of Islamic teachings in addressing contemporary environmental crises. By connecting theological principles with practical environmental actions at the classroom, institutional, and community levels, moderate Islam offers a contextual and inclusive approach to sustainability. This integration encourages the development of ecological awareness that is balanced, just, and participatory, while also fostering collaboration between religious institutions and society in promoting

environmental stewardship. Consequently, religious moderation emerges not only as a framework for social harmony but also as a transformative paradigm for sustainable ecological ethics.

Table 3. Synthesis of Research Findings

Aspect	Main Findings
Theological Foundation	Tawhid and the concept of caliphate form the basis of ecological ethics
Main Principle	Tawazun (balance) serves as the core of ecological education
Implementation	Conducted at classroom, institutional, and community levels
Impact	Develops ecological awareness that is just, balanced, and sustainable
Contribution	Religious moderation evolves into an environmental ethical paradigm

Social Ecology (Relationships between Humans, Society, and the Environment)

Social ecology is a critical approach that views environmental crises not solely as natural problems, but as consequences of social relations, power structures, and value systems that develop within society. Environmental damage is often rooted in exploitative patterns of human relations, both towards other humans and towards nature. Thus, ecological issues cannot be separated from the social, economic, and cultural issues that shape how humans produce, consume, and interpret the environment (Almughyiri, 2025; Bronfenbrenner, 1979b).

From a social ecological perspective, humans are not positioned as separate entities or superior to nature, but rather as part of an interdependent web of life. The relationship between humans and the environment is reciprocal, where changes in the social system will have a direct impact on ecological conditions. (Dharmawan, 2007; Ramadiani, 2025) Social inequality, structural poverty, and unfair distribution of resources are important factors that exacerbate environmental degradation, especially for the groups of people most vulnerable to the impacts of the ecological crisis.

The social ecology approach also emphasizes the role of communities as collective actors in shaping environmental management practices. Values, social norms, and cultural traditions influence how communities interact with nature (Sudarto et al., 2024; Turyani et al., 2024). In many cases, local wisdom contributes to environmental conservation, but is eroded by a modern economic system oriented toward growth and exploitation. Therefore, reinforcing equitable social values is a key element in building ecological sustainability.

In the context of moderate Islam, social ecology can be understood through a theological framework that emphasizes balance (*mīzān*), justice (*'adl*), and welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). Islam views the relationship between humans, society, and the environment as an inseparable moral whole. (Harahap, 2015) Environmental damage (*fasād*) is not only an ecological violation but also reflects a social and moral failure in fulfilling our mandate as caliphs on earth. Thus, social ecology finds resonance within the normative values of moderate Islam.

The relationship between humans and society from an Islamic social ecology perspective demands collective responsibility for environmental sustainability. (Sakka & Kara, 2025) Moderate Islam encourages social participation, solidarity, and concern for the ecological impacts of economic and development activities. Moderate religious practice extends beyond individual piety to social action that promotes environmental justice and the common good.

Furthermore, the social ecology approach highlights the importance of transforming social structures that give rise to ecological inequality. In this context, moderate Islam offers an ethical critique of systems that legitimize the excessive exploitation of natural resources. The principle of *wasatiyyah* encourages a balance between development needs and environmental carrying capacity, and rejects extremes in both consumption and management of natural resources.

Social ecology also opens up a dialogue between religious values and modern science in formulating solutions to the environmental crisis (Charry López et al., 2026; Ironsi, 2023; Lellya et al., 2026). Moderate Islam, with its inclusive and contextual nature, allows for the integration of religious teachings with scientific approaches and sustainability-oriented public policies (Ahida et al., 2025). This synergy is important to ensure that environmental conservation efforts are not only technocratic, but also have moral and social legitimacy.

Thus, social ecology within a moderate Islamic framework provides a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between humans, society, and the environment. This approach asserts that the ecological crisis reflects a crisis in social and moral relations, thus requiring a shift in paradigms, values, and social practices. Moderate Islam serves as an ethical foundation capable of guiding social transformation toward a just, balanced, and sustainable order of life.

Integration of Moderate Islam and Social Ecology

The integration of moderate Islam and social ecology is a conceptual effort to respond to the environmental crisis comprehensively by combining Islamic theological values and critical analysis of social structures (Firnando & Setiawati, 2025). The ecological crisis cannot be understood solely as a technical environmental issue, but rather as a result of unequal social relations, exploitative production and consumption patterns, and an ethical crisis in understanding nature. In this context, moderate Islam offers a normative framework that emphasizes balance, justice, and moral responsibility as the basis for environmental management.

Moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) places the principle of balance between spiritual and social interests as the ethical foundation of life. This principle aligns with the idea of social ecology, which emphasizes the close relationship between humans, society, and the environment. From an Islamic theological perspective, humans are not positioned as absolute rulers over nature, but rather as caliphs entrusted with the responsibility to protect and care for the earth (Syauqiah & Alfalah, 2025). The integration of these two approaches strengthens the understanding that ecological sustainability can only be achieved if social relations are built in a just and balanced manner.

A social ecology approach helps reveal that environmental damage is often rooted in social inequality, economic domination, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Moderate Islam provides an ethical response to these realities through the principles of justice (*'adl*) and welfare (*maṣlahah*). This integration affirms that ecological injustice, such as environmental pollution and the appropriation of living space, violates Islamic values that demand the protection of human life and dignity.

In the social realm, the integration of moderate Islam and social ecology encourages the strengthening of social piety oriented toward environmental concerns. Religious practices are no longer understood in individualistic and ritualistic terms, but are instead embodied in collective actions that maintain the balance of nature. *Wasathiyyah* values encourage Muslims to avoid excessive consumerism and develop a simple lifestyle that aligns with the environment's carrying capacity (Nadhifah & Syakur, 2025).

Furthermore, this integration also opens up space for institutional transformation and public policy based on moderate religious values. Moderate Islam can serve as a source of moral legitimacy in promoting sustainable development policies and equitable natural resource management. When moderate Islamic values are internalized in social structures and policies, environmental conservation efforts gain broader and more sustainable social support.

At the discourse level, the integration of moderate Islam and social ecology enriches Islamic discourse with a contextual ecological dimension (Mudin et al., 2025). This approach allows for a reinterpretation of classical Islamic teachings to make them relevant to contemporary environmental challenges without losing their normative authority. Thus, Islam emerges not only as a religion responsive to issues of tolerance and peace, but also as a source of global ecological ethics.

This integration also encourages dialogue between Islam and modern science in formulating solutions to the ecological crisis (Enha et al., 2025). Moderate Islam, with its inclusive and adaptive character, is able to bridge religious values with scientific findings and technical approaches to environmental management. This synergy is crucial to ensuring that ecological solutions are not only technically effective but also socially and morally acceptable.

Thus, the integration of moderate Islam and social ecology offers an alternative paradigm for addressing the multidimensional environmental crisis. This approach emphasizes that ecological sustainability requires a transformation of values, social relations, and religious practices. Moderate Islam serves as a theological foundation and social ethics capable of guiding change toward a just, balanced, and sustainable order of life in the relationships between humans, society, and the environment.

Table 4. Moderate Islam and Ecological Justice in Indonesia

Dimension	Description	Indonesian Context
Ecological Crisis	Environmental destruction caused by structural and social inequality	Deforestation, pollution, agrarian conflict, climate change
Theological Foundation	Humans as khalifah and holders of divine trust (amanah)	Religious responsibility to preserve nature
Moderate Islamic Values	Balance, justice, welfare, moderation	Ethical basis for environmental protection
Role of Religious Institutions	Ecological preaching, education, and advocacy	Eco-mosque movement, Islamic environmental campaigns
Social Collaboration	Interfaith and intercultural environmental cooperation	Community-based ecological movements
Policy Contribution	Moral legitimacy for sustainable development	Support for fair environmental regulations
Main Challenge	Gap between religious discourse and environmental practice	Political and economic interests limiting implementation

Moderate Islam and Ecological Justice in the Indonesian Context

Indonesia, as a country with high biodiversity and serious ecological vulnerability, faces complex environmental challenges (Abdullah et al., 2023; Sudiyanto et al., 2025; Supriatna, 2018). Deforestation, water and air pollution, agrarian conflicts, and the impacts of climate change demonstrate that Indonesia's ecological crisis cannot be separated from social and structural issues (Choy & Onuma, 2025; Supriatna & Lenz, 2022). In this context, ecological justice is a crucial issue that demands cross-sectoral attention, including religion, as a source of values and moral orientation for society.

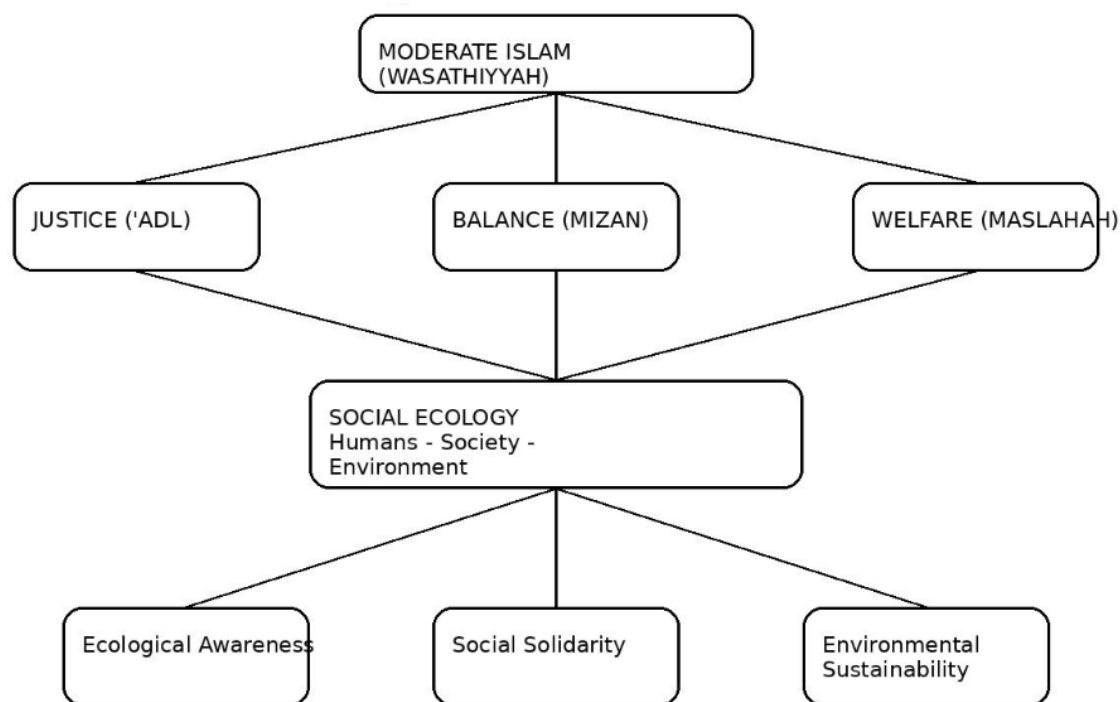


Figure 1. Integration of Moderate Islam and Social Ecology

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship between the values of Moderate Islam (*Wasathiyyah*) and the principles of social ecology in building ecological justice and environmental sustainability. At the top of the diagram, Moderate Islam serves as the main theological and ethical foundation that guides human interaction with society and the environment. This framework emphasizes three essential Islamic values: justice (*'adl*), balance (*mīzān*), and welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). These values function as moral principles that shape social and ecological responsibility.

The arrows connecting these values to the concept of social ecology indicate that environmental issues cannot be separated from social relations and ethical considerations. Social ecology views humans, society, and nature as interconnected elements within a single ecological system. Therefore, ecological damage is understood not only as an environmental problem but also as the result of social inequality, exploitation, and imbalance in human behavior toward nature.

The lower part of the figure demonstrates the practical implications of integrating Moderate Islam and social ecology. The interaction between justice, balance, and welfare produces ecological awareness, social solidarity, and environmental sustainability. Ecological awareness encourages individuals and communities to protect nature responsibly, while social solidarity strengthens

collective participation in environmental preservation. These processes ultimately lead to ecological justice, represented at the bottom of the diagram as the final goal of a just, balanced, and sustainable society.

Overall, Figure 1 explains that Moderate Islam provides a theological and ethical framework capable of guiding social transformation toward ecological sustainability. The integration of Islamic moderation values with social ecology creates a holistic approach in which religious teachings, social responsibility, and environmental ethics are interconnected in promoting harmonious relationships between humans, society, and nature.

Moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*) has strategic relevance in responding to the issue of ecological justice in Indonesia (Zuhri, 2022). By emphasizing the principles of balance, justice, and welfare, moderate Islam offers an ethical framework that rejects the excessive and unjust exploitation of natural resources. From this perspective, environmental damage is understood as a form of injustice that directly impacts vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, small farmers, and coastal communities, who depend on the sustainability of nature for their livelihoods.

Ecological justice in moderate Islam is rooted in the theological understanding of amanah (trust) and khalifah (vicegerent). Humans are seen as stewards of the earth, responsible for ensuring the fair and sustainable distribution of natural resources. In the Indonesian context, this principle is relevant for critiquing development practices that sacrifice the environment and local communities for short-term economic interests (Hamzani et al., 2025; McCarthy & Warren, 2009; Soeharto et al., 2025). Moderate Islam thus serves as a normative foundation for championing the ecological rights of communities.

The relationship between moderate Islam and social ecology in Indonesia is also reflected in the role of religious communities and organizations. Islamic organizations have great potential to shape collective awareness of the importance of ecological justice through preaching, education, and social advocacy (Madina, 2021; Mamdukh Budiman, 2025). A moderate approach allows environmental issues to be raised as part of social piety and religious responsibility, not merely as a technical matter or secular activism (Hasbiyallah et al., 2024; Susanto & Dwijayanto, 2022).

In Indonesia's pluralistic social context, moderate Islam also opens up space for interfaith and intercultural dialogue in the fight for ecological justice. The environmental crisis is transboundary and impacts all levels of society, necessitating inclusive cooperation. The values of religious moderation encourage social collaboration that transcends identity barriers for the common good of environmental sustainability and sustainable livelihoods.

Furthermore, moderate Islam can contribute to the formulation of public policies oriented toward ecological justice. Moderate Islamic values can serve as an ethical source in the development of regulations on natural resource management, spatial planning, and sustainable development. With strong social legitimacy, moderate Islam has the potential to strengthen public support for just and sustainable environmental policies.

The main challenge in integrating moderate Islam and ecological justice in Indonesia lies in the gap between discourse and practice. Although the values of justice and balance have been widely articulated, their implementation is often hampered by economic and political interests (Febriyanti & Sapa, 2025; Salwa & Sunaryo, 2025). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen education, contextual preaching, and consistent religious-based social movements in advocating for ecological justice.

Thus, moderate Islam plays a strategic role in building ecological justice in the Indonesian context. The integration of *wasathiyah* values with social ecological awareness enables religion to

function as a transformative force in addressing the environmental crisis. Moderate Islam not only contributes to social harmony and tolerance but also serves as an ethical foundation for championing just and sustainable relations between humans, society, and the environment.

CONCLUSION

Moderate Islam and social ecology demonstrate that the environmental crisis cannot be understood solely as a technical or ecological issue, but rather as a reflection of a crisis in social, ethical, and spiritual relations in human life. Moderate Islam (*wasathiyah*) offers a theological framework that affirms the principles of balance, justice, and moral responsibility in human relations with God, fellow human beings, and the universe. These theological values provide a solid normative foundation for the development of social ecological awareness, placing environmental sustainability and ecological justice as integral parts of individual piety and the social responsibility of the community.

The integration of moderate Islam with a social ecological approach demonstrates that environmental degradation is closely intertwined with social inequality and exploitative development practices. In this context, Islamic principles such as *khalifah*, *amanah*, *mizān*, and *maṣlaḥah* emphasize the importance of fair natural resource management and support for vulnerable groups. Moderate Islam is thus not only relevant in maintaining social harmony and religious tolerance but also serves as a public ethic critical of ecological injustice.

In the Indonesian context, moderate Islam has strategic potential as a transformative force through the role of religious communities and organizations in building awareness, advocacy, and practices of ecological justice. However, the main challenge lies in the gap between normative discourse and social implementation. Therefore, strengthening contextual religious education, ecological preaching, and the integration of moderate Islamic values into public policy are necessary so that religion can contribute significantly to building just, balanced, and sustainable relationships between humans, society, and the environment.

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